JIVARAN STOCK

Distribution of Tribes. -- This group of Indians, commonly known as the Jivaro, occupies a large territory on the eastern slope of the Andes Mountains in Ecuador between the Chinchipa, Altomaranan, and Pastaza Rivers. A small space between the Marona and the lower Pastaza is inhabited by the Murato. There are nine tribes speaking dialects of the Jivaran language, and having similar cultures: Huambesa, Tamora, Cuanduasi, Ashira, Andoa, Copotaza, Arapeca, Chargaime, and Upano. The first five of these tribes are friendly among themselves, and are enemies of the other four tribes. A line drawn west from Andoa would divide these two hostile factions. I was unable to visit the Jivaro in their own country to make personal observations, but was fortunate in finding at Iquitos, Peru, Sr. F. T. Muniz, who lived and traveled for some years among this people, and who gave me much information regarding them.

Early in the Seventeenth Century, the missionaries came into contact with some of the tribes, and established stations. The old Spanish town of Macas is reported to have had at one time several thousand Jivaro, but today the town has disappeared and the inhabitants are scattered among the Upano, who speak a dialect of the same language. The more remote tribes have had little contact with the Whites, and they continue to practise their old customs and to live their old tribal life. Their number has been reduced, until at the present time there are not more than eight or ten thousand remaining.

7: Farabee--115-123 (1907) 1922 Jivaro-2
105, 116

Home Life. -- There is no chief over the whole group, but each tribe has its own headman. In time of war, a war-chief is selected who has absolute authority. They have no villages, but live in large oval-shaped communal houses, which may be seventy-five feet long and forty feet wide, containing several families. A family living in the large house may have a small house at a clearing some distance away where they live while cultivating their fields. The houses are built of poles and have thatched roofs, the walls continuing to the ground, without windows or other openings except two [116] doors, one at either end of the house, one of which is for the use of women and the other for men. Each woman has her own little section of the women's end of the house, with her fireplace made of three short logs with ends together. At the other end of the house the men are grouped, each having his own stool and couch. The men in the house spend their time manufacturing blowguns, poisoned darts, quivers, lances, and round shields of wood or tapir skin. Here they make and keep the great signal drum. The men sit on stools, but the women must sit on the floor. They have no hammocks, but sleep on couches built on raised platforms around the walls. The women take care of the dogs, and keep them tied day and night to the foot of their couches. They make coarse pottery by the common coiling method, and also make baskets, nets, mats, and ropes as needed.
Food Supply. -- They are an agricultural people, depending less upon hunting and fishing than many of the neighboring tribes. They grow corn, cassava, sweet potatoes, and

plantains. They depend to some extent upon hunting and fishing. They use no bow and arrows, but depend upon other devices. They are more expert at using the blowgun than any of the surrounding tribes.

The blowgun is made of two pieces of chonta palm, carved, polished, wrapped with strips of bark, and covered with pitch. The guns are about seven feet long, one and a half inches in diameter at the mouthpiece, and taper to three-quarters of an inch at the muzzle. The mouthpiece is made of bone which is inserted in the end of the gun. The Yagua blowgun mouthpiece is spool-shaped with a depression for the lips, while the Jivaro mouthpiece has a bone which is put into the mouth when blown.

The poisoned arrows are made of strips of chonta palm with a wisp of silk-cotton on one end to fill the bore and catch the breath. They are carried in a quiver which is fastened to a small joint of bamboo filled with curari poison, into which the points are dipped before being used. Blowguns are used here as bows and arrows are used among the other tribes, for killing birds and monkeys. The flight of the arrow is noiseless, and when it strikes the animal the shock is so slight that no attention is paid to it. The poison acts so quickly that the animal soon becomes dizzy and falls to the ground. The blowgun is the most effective weapon for all small game. [117]

They use traps, snares, and pitfalls for catching the larger animals. For catching fish they use large nets with nut sinkers and balsa floats. They also poison the pools

with the roots of babasco (Jacquinia armillaris). When the poison is used in large quantities the water is turned a whitish color, killing all the fish, which float on the surface where they are picked up from canoes.

Certain animals are taboo. The deer and sloth are supposed to be the dwelling places of the evil spirits, and are not eaten. The tapir is not considered good for women to eat. The men grow tobacco, and use it to smoke and drink.

Fire Making. -- They make fire by the common method of twirling a stick between the palms. They have an interesting tradition of how they first obtained fire. In the beginning they cooked their eggs in the sun, and warmed their food under their arms. A Jivaro man, Takia, first learned to make fire by rubbing two sticks together, but he kept the fire to himself, and would not allow his people to use it or to know how to make it, so they attempted to steal it from him. At that time the Jivaro resembled men but could fly like birds. Several men went to Takia's house to try to get the fire, but Takia kept his door ajar, and when one put his head in, he closed the door, and killed him. The snake said that he would try another method, so he wet his wings, and went to the path where Takia's wife would find him in the early morning. She took pity on him, carried him into the house, and placed him near the fire. When he was warm and dry, he took a fire brand with his tail, and flew away to the top of a dead tree where he obtained some dry bark in which he wrapped the fire, and carried it to his own house. There he built

a fire, and gave it to his people, so they were no longer compelled to ripen their food under their arms. Takia scolded his wife, but the Jivaro have had fire ever since, and know how to make it by rubbing together two pieces of silk-cotton wood.

Dress and Ornamentation. --Men wear either a kilt-like cotton garment reaching the knees, or a loose sleeveless bark shirt. These garments are sometimes painted in geometric designs, or decorated by sewing on strings of monkey teeth, beads, or feathers. The leaders of the dance wear a beautiful ceremonial hat or crown made of feathers. The men also wear a back ornament made of bird bones, which is suspended from a band over the forehead. The [118] mummified head or war trophy is worn suspended over this ornament of bird bones. The women wear a skirt of cotton or bark which reaches a little below the knees, and a cotton cloak thrown over one shoulder and fastened under the arm. The children run about naked until the approach of puberty.

Both men and women wear necklaces of the teeth of various animals, and seeds of various kinds and colors. In their ears the men wear sticks of chonta palm about six inches long and one inch thick, from which are suspended feathers and wings of beetles. The nose and lips are not perforated. They paint their faces, hands, and feet black with 'wito' (Genipa Americana), for protection against the flies and the sun. The hair is worn long behind, and cut square across the front. The men wear a loop of hair in front of their ears, wrapped and decorated with feathers.

Marriage. -- Polygamy is common among the Jivaro. A man has the first right to marry his cousin, and may also take her younger sister when she reaches the age of puberty. He is not compelled to marry his cousin, as he may prefer to steal a wife from an enemy tribe. The consent of the girl's father is necessary, before the marriage can take place, and if he is willing, he gives a great feast inviting all the members of the large household. The feast and marriage ceremony are in charge of the medicine man. When all are ready, the medicine man takes food and serves it to the bride, saying, 'This is the way you must serve your husband.' He offers her corn, cassava bread, sweet potatoes, and plantains, and each time repeats the same injunction. Then he brings a servant whom the bridegroom has secured, and says, 'You must always be ready to serve your husband without his asking.' This concludes the ceremony proper, and the rest of the night is spent in feasting and dancing.

The Jivaro often make raids upon their enemies for the purpose of carrying off young women for wives or servants. It has been reported that the Jivaro practise the couvade, but my informant was positive that they do not now, and probably never did.

When a man goes to visit a friend at his house, he steps inside the door, and stands at one side. A woman brings him a seat, and announces him. His host washes, combs his hair, paints his face, and dresses; when ready, he advances, greets the visitor, and sits down in front of him. The visitor talks in a high voice for fifteen [119] or twenty minutes without interruption, giving an account of what he has seen, and what he

has done since their last meeting. The host occasionally gives assent by saying, 'And this is the way you have done it.' When the visitor has concluded, the host takes his turn for about the same period, then they stop and begin talking about other things in a quiet tone. When a woman enters a house she is taken at once to the women's apartment without any ceremony.

The Dead. -- When a man dies he is left in his bed, all of his possessions are placed about him, together with food and drink. The house and fields are deserted, and no one ever goes back to the house or takes anything from the fields.

Religion. -- The Jivaro do not have a well developed religious belief. Iguanchi, their chief spirit, takes account of all the important acts of life, but he is not worshipped in any sense, although he is considered a good and friendly spirit. It is unfortunate that the early missionaries applied the name of this good spirit to the Devil and manufactured a new name for God. The Jivaro have never willingly accepted religious teaching, and many times have driven the missionaries out of the country. They despise the Zaparo, because they have accepted Christian teaching, and are more under the influence of the Whites. The Zaparo, on the other hand, call the Jivaro 'ancas,' or savages, and are greatly afraid of them.

Medicine Men. -- No one dies a natural death. Disease and death are caused by the influence of an enemy medicine man, and hence the disease must be overcome by a friendly medicine man. The medicine man uses both herbs and magic combined. He

selects his herbs, performs his incantations over them, moving his head from side to side, and then gives them to the patient. He then soaks tobacco in water, takes the fluid in the hollow of his hands, and sniffs it into his nostrils. He continues his incantations, and calls upon the evil spirit to come out of the man, saying 'If you, the evil one, have caused this sickness, come and take it away.' He asks the patient if he feels better; if he does not, then he calls upon the animals in the same language. If the patient is not better by this time he gathers other herbs and repeats the process, then he sucks from the seat of the pain and exhibits a piece of bone, chonta, or a small spider which he has sucked out. If the patient gets well, he makes lavish presents to the medicine [120] man, but if he dies, his friends may kill the medicine man or some member of his family, and a vendetta may be started in this way. When a medicine man is sent for, he first makes inquiry, and if he thinks a person may not recover he finds some excuse for not administering unto him.

Mummified Heads. -- The Jivaro are considered war-like people, and as stated above, they are divided into two hostile groups, which have been traditional enemies for generations and live in a chronic state of warfare. There are continual raids made from one tribe to another, killing the men, and carrying off the women. They are sometimes called head hunters and cannibals, because they cut off the heads of the enemy, and carry them home to be preserved as trophies (plate 20). They are not cannibals, as they never eat any portion of the body.

The tsantsa, or mummified head, is their greatest trophy. When one makes a raid to secure a head the chances are even that he will lose his own, hence it is considered a great honor to take the head of one of the traditional enemy. If the head is that of a chief, some noted warrior, or other important individual, the honor is greater, and a great feast must be given to which all the friendly tribes are invited. To give such a feast it is necessary to clear a field and grow cassava, corn, and plantains, for food and drink for the great throng that will attend. This requires several months or possibly two or three years, hence it is necessary to preserve the head in order to have it present at the feast, as evidence of the hero's prowess.

The hero must plant his fields, but near the time of the feast his friends may assist him in hunting and fishing, and preserving meat, while the women of the house assist his wife in making great quantities of drink to be stored in large earthen jars.

The man must also undergo a fast, or rather submit to taboos. He paints his body with black lines, lives alone, and shows his bravery by going without weapons. He must not kill game with a spear, or eat the flesh of certain animals. He confines himself almost entirely to fruits, vegetables, and fish caught in the net. When the time for the feast arrives, the head-man takes charge. When the dance is ready to begin, the hero, carrying the tsantsa on the top of a staff, comes through the house, and presents it to the Master of Ceremonies, who dips the head first into a decoction of [121] tobacco, then in chicha, and again in clear water. He afterwards pours a little of each of these

beverages into the mouth of the hero, who is seated on a low stool. This ceremony ends the fast for the hero, and frees him from further obligations. The tobacco juice he has taken serves as a violent emetic, but he soon recovers, goes to the river for a bath, and returns to take part in the dance. The Master of Ceremonies carries the head towards the dancers, falls on his knees many times, and ends by making an address complimentary to the courage of the hero, in which he says, 'Brave Jivaro, you have avenged an injury.' He then sets up the staff, with the head on it, in the dance ground; and the men, with the hero's wife, clasp hands and dance around the head, hurling ridicule and derisive epithets at it, as they advance and retreat. At the same time the other women dance in a great circle on the outside of the men.

The dance at the feast of the head is the only opportunity that a woman ever has to dance with the men. It is her greatest honor. After this dance is over, the hero takes the head and hangs it on the principal pillar of the house, where it remains indefinitely. It may eventually be thrown into the river or disposed of at will. In some tribes it is kept and worn on anniversary occasions over the bird-bone back ornament. This ends the ceremonies connected with the head, but the dance continues day and night until the supplies are exhausted.

At midnight on the last day of the dance, a large number of young peccaries, which have been kept fat for the occasion, are brought out, killed by the Master of Ceremonies, and divided among the guests to furnish food for their journey home. This signifies the end of the dance, and is the farewell salutation. Preparations are now made for the

departure, and then all join in a final dance which ends at daybreak. They have been eating, drinking, and dancing for days, and all are so tired that they soon camp and take a long sleep.

When the enemy is killed, his head is cut off with a bamboo knife, and carried home where it is hung up for three or four days until decomposition begins. An incision is made at the edge of the hair and carried over the top of the head to the back of the neck, and the skull is removed. The skin is cleaned of flesh, and boiled in an infusion of herbs containing astringents and preserva- [122] tives. The skin is then sewn up, and shrunken by putting hot sand and hot stones inside. As the skin shrinks it is manipulated to keep it in the desired form. Finally the head is greased and smoked for a long time over a fire made of roots of a certain palm tree. To keep the lips in position while the skin is drying, three small chonta palm sticks are thrust through them below, and cotton strings woven in and out over the lips. These sticks are replaced with cotton cord when the head is completely cured; a transverse cord is attached to the three suspended cords, and hanging from it there are usually several single cords about fifteen inches long, decorated with feathers or beetle wings. These cords are not records, or quipus, but are used for ornamental purposes only. The ears are perforated, and have various decorations of feathers, beads, and beetle wings suspended.

When the skin is sewn up, a short stick is placed inside, attached to a string through a hole in the top of the head. This is used for suspension of the head over the ornament

of bird bones, when it is worn. The head is reduced to about one-eighth its normal size as is shown in the photograph (plate 20), and is very dark brown in color on account of the smoke. It has been said that these heads resemble the originals to such an extent that they may be recognized. A woman is said to have recognized the head of her son, but in all such cases of recognition the fact is known that the head has been taken, and that it is kept in a certain house, so it would be very easy to identify it. There is so little resemblance to the original head that anyone seeing a head for the first time is likely to doubt the story of its origin.

Some tribes preserve the heads of their friends as well as those of their enemies, but women's heads are never preserved.

Every boy is trained to be a warrior. He learns the manufacture and use of weapons, and the taking of the head. He kills a sloth, reduces and preserves its head in the same way that the warriors preserve the heads of their slain enemies.

For protection against the raids of their enemies they make sharp points of chonta palm and set them in the ground about the fields, so as to impale the enemy as he approaches. They also dig pitfalls in the trails, plant lances below, and cover the pit with leaves and bark. These pits are usually dug near the place where a log crosses the trail.

Dances. -- In ordinary dances, the men and women dance around a circle, not together but at the same time, all singing with a flute accompaniment. There is a

special dance which the men dance in pairs. Each is armed with a lance, each in turn makes a short address in which he glorifies himself, then dances in front of the others with his lance ready to strike, and ends by making a feint at his opponent; the others then go through the same performance. In the love dance, a man dances in a circle, blowing a flute, while a woman follows him about.

The drum is never used to furnish music for the dance, but only for purposes of communication. It is made of a log, five feet long and one foot in diameter, with a hole burned out in the middle leaving a lip which gives only a single tone (figure 15)."